

## **FY21 ALTER Amendment #2 (EMS)**

Sponsors: CMs Alter, Ellis, Harper-Madison, Pool, and Tovo

Strategic Outcome(s): Public Safety / Health & Environment

### **Supporting EMS during COVID-19 and beyond**

Austin's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department medics are responsible for responding to medical emergencies throughout the City, and have faced resource and FTE constraints while doing so. These challenges have existed for years, but have become especially clear during the coronavirus pandemic.

In order to support our medical first responders during COVID-19 and through the coming years, we must invest in purchasing ambulances and associated equipment (as well as associated FTEs), staff up our Paramedic Consult Line, increase the number of Communications Specialists, and add commander FTEs to ensure adequate supervision of the broader EMS system. We also must add administrative staff to support these enhanced efforts. At a minimum, the following investments are necessary to support our EMS workers as they battle the pandemic and seek to meet growing needs in Austin.

### **Details**

#### **Add two 24-hour Ambulances**

##### **One-time Costs**

\$954,376 for 2 ambulances, related equipment & uniforms

##### **2 full time ambulance staff**

\$1,446,350 for 24 FTEs

*These ambulances will cover the increasing call volume in the central core of Austin. One ambulance will come online in October and one in January 2021, and the staffing will follow normal EMS hiring practices and promotional processes.*

#### **Increase Paramedic Consult Line Staff**

##### **8 Field Clinical Specialists for Consult Line**

\$281,202 for 8 FTEs for the continued staffing of the consult line plus one-time costs of \$28,000

*The Paramedic Consult Line extends triage to people with COVID-19 symptoms. To date, the line has taken 5,000 COVID-19 related calls, allowing our medics to make better PPE decisions. After COVID-19, these paramedics will help provide more appropriate triage to get the right resources to the community.*

#### **Communication Specialists**

##### **4 Communication Specialists**

\$282,796 for 4 FTEs plus one-time costs of \$14,000

*Currently, Clinical Specialists are forced to monitor too many calls at a time, making it difficult for medics who need immediate assistance to receive it. Adding 4 FTEs will create a new Medical Control channel so that Communication Medics will have a more manageable call volume to monitor.*

#### **Command District**

##### **5 Field Commanders (District Command 7)**

\$452,969 for 5 FTEs plus one-time costs of \$265,930

*At current staffing levels, our commanders are not currently able to supervise the number of ambulances and provide the decontamination and other responsibilities we have tasked them with.*

**Administrative staff**

**Five additional administrative FTEs to support the expansion of the EMS department**

\$320,564 for 5 FTEs plus one-time costs of \$7,500

*The five administrative support staff include an Accounts Payable Supervisor, an Ambulance Billing & Coding Rep I, a Human Resources Specialist, an Inventory Control Specialist, and a Fire Protection Equipment Technician.*

**EMS Minimum Request Summary (FY 2021 Cost)**

	FTEs	One-Time Costs	FTE Salaries & C/Cs (First Year)	First Year Cost	FY22 marginal increase
24 Hour Ambulances 1	12.00	\$477,188	\$723,175	\$1,200,363	\$315,370
24 Hour Ambulances 2	12.00	\$477,188	\$723,175	\$1,200,363	\$315,370
Consult Line (C4) - 8 Clinical Specialist	8.00	\$28,000	\$281,202	\$309,202	\$116,341
4 Clinical Specialist Comm	4.00	\$14,000	\$282,796	\$296,796	\$517,073
5 Commanders (District Command 7) + Truck and Equipment	5.00	\$265,930	\$452,969	\$718,899	\$182,432
Admin staff	5.00	\$7,500	\$320,564	\$328,064	\$67,118
TOTALS	46.00	\$1,269,806	\$2,783,883	\$4,053,688	\$1,513,704

*Note: FTE staffing will follow EMS hiring practices and promotional processes; therefore, certain FTEs are projected to come online at different points during FY21, reflected in the first-year costs. In FY22, FTE costs will increase by the marginal amount noted in the final column above, and our accounting must plan for the need for these recurring funds. Additionally, in FY22, the FTE salaries will increase by 1% according to the EMS contract (not calculated here).*

**Note on funding sources:** All one-time costs (and likely some salary) may be eligible for federal CARES, FEMA and/or other COVID-19 spending framework funds. The \$1,269,806 in one-time costs are for vehicles and related equipment, and at least the vehicles can be purchased through contractual obligation (KO) which could spread most of the one-time costs over multiple years if COVID related funds are not available.